Conclusion

New Directions in Policing and Intergroup Communication

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The chapters in this book have made a compelling case for the critical roles of communication in handling many different issues in policing, including crowd management, traffic stops, criminal investigations, and a variety of specific types of crimes and crises. In tandem, we have seen how communication within the police organization is crucial for effective recruitment, retention, and supervision as well as establishing relationships with other agencies and institutions. The authors' contributions make it clear that the success or failure of policing in society depends heavily on the nature and quality of communication by its practitioners.

All of these processes—many of which are intergroup in nature—are impacted by messages played out in various genres including the news media, social media, and fictional accounts of policing. In this conclusion, we attempt to pull out many of the abiding constructs evident in the previous chapters—and the relationships between them—using automated text analysis methods. Thereafter, we propose a heuristic, working model of significant relationships operating between communities and policing that is related to all the specified chapters in this volume. The components and the links between them in this model are illustrated by discussing a series of protest incidents between police and the public in Minneapolis (May–June 2020) in response to the killing of George Floyd, an event that received global attention. We end with some major communicative challenges we will face going forward that are suggested by this intergroup strife and beyond.

THEMES EMERGING IN THIS COLLECTION

Recently, and with a view to quickly capturing the essence of key themes in the field of intergroup communication, we provided a word cloud analysis of the titles of papers presented at the 1st International Symposium of Intergroup Communication in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 2017 (Keblusek, Giles, Maass, and Gardikiotis 2018). From this, four clusters emerged relating to: theories of identity expression and negotiation; the verbal and nonlinguistic features of communicating those expressions; the language and cultures in which they were studied; and the settings and contexts in which the intergroup phenomena operate. Inspired by the usefulness of this approach, we performed a word cloud analysis on the texts of all the conclusion sections of the chapters in this book (see figure 23.1). We are mindful of the limitations of such rudimentary visualizations (Harris 2011; Relihan 2020), such as a reliance on simple word counts rather than more complex word frequency and co-occurrence statistics. At the same time, we find them useful as a simplistic tool for capturing themes present in the cumulative text of each chapters' conclusion.

FIGURE 23.1. A Word Cloud Analysis of the Conclusion Sections to the Handbook Chapters.

From this analysis, we can see our authors' juxtapositioning of police, policing, and officers on the one hand, and community, communities, and citizens on the other. Clearly, and perhaps not surprisingly given the focus of this volume, communication, communications, relationships, and the media are central in this equation, as is research and the notions of time and change. Also prominent are the social constructs of enforcement, justice, trust, perceptions, intergroup, and resilience. It is interesting to note—with social groups such as women, Muslims, and LGBTQ highlighted—what processes are either *not* apparent or absent in this image (and hence the chapter conclusions), such as biases, prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping.

As a means of gaining more sophisticated insight into the relationships between these and other constructs, we submitted these same textual data to Leximancer, which has been used in a number of intergroup settings, particularly communication accommodation in health-related settings (see Baker, Gallois, Driedger, and Santesso 2011; Gallois, Cretchley, and Watson 2012). Leximancer is a text-mining tool for detecting concepts in textual data and developing concept maps. Concepts in the Leximancer-sense are statistically meaningful groups of words (called bag-of-words) generated from the input data using word occurrence and co-occurrence information. This technique has the advantage that the layout of concept names can then represent interconceptual similarity as can be seen from the Leximancer Concept Network (visualized using the Gephi graph layout tool) in figure 23.2.

It is not surprising that the top ranked concepts in the Leximancer concept network are guides to the entire collection. Other themes identified (moving in a clockwise direction from the nine o'clock position) focus on the role of social media, issues relating to

FIGURE 23.2. A Leximancer Concept Network Analysis of the Conclusion Sections of the Handbook Chapters.

violence, organizational-level change, the role of gender, and interactional practices (and closely related, although in its own cluster, the specific dynamics of police interaction). Noteworthy, but perhaps not surprising, is the centrality of the concept "intergroup," particularly in linking concepts on interaction dynamics, gender, and social processes to police and public institutions.

A HEURISTIC MODEL OF POLICING, COMMUNICATION, AND SOCIETY

Choi and Giles (2012) crafted what was essentially the first schematic model to attend to communication and police encounters with the public. The chapters in this current book explore a far wider and more complex range of communication processes and settings than what was available at the time this model was introduced. For example, the model did not address communication issues internal to police organizations; but with the rapid ascent of research on organizational justice in policing (see chapters 2 and 3), these issues clearly deserve attention. Therefore, we elaborate on the Choi and Giles model (see figure 23.3 with components letter-labeled) with the goal of providing a more holistic (yet parsimonious) framework for understanding policing, communication, and society. A key element of this goal is to develop a model that modestly and coherently integrates the chapters herein. Positive–negative valence is visually depicted as signaling potentially contrastive effects associated with each link.
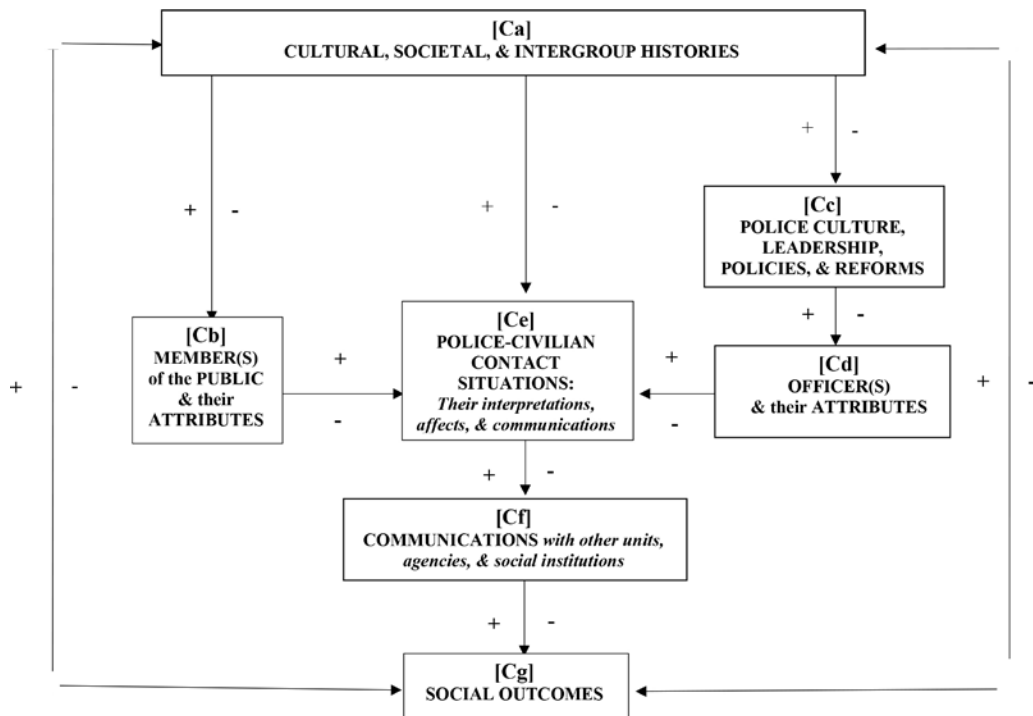

FIGURE 23.3. A Model of Communication, Policing, and Society

At the top of the model is an amalgam component that refers to distinctive cultural and societal values, including media activities that reflect them. This component critically includes the objective and subjectively perceived social histories (e.g., of slavery, lynchings, civil rights movements, disasters, and so forth) as well as past and recent policing incidents that have gained significant attention. Changes over the decades in racial equality and police reform have been considered glacial by some. Of course, many perspectives disagree, and certain communities demand more transparency and influence in how they are policed. Nonetheless, this (top central) contextual conglomerate [Ca] can shape and enable three entities. First [Cb], members of the public's attributes are highlighted, including their gender, age, ethnicity schemas, values, and personalities. Also relevant are people's social networks and social identities, attitudes toward and expectations of police, public bystanders, and their community resilience (see chapters 6–9, and 13). Second [Cc], police culture (and allied professional associations and unions) is featured, including recruitment and retention procedures, leadership and management practices and their media communiques, community- and reform-orientations (see chapters 1, 2, and 10). These, in turn [Cd], mold officers' attributes, including their gender and ethnicity schemas, personalities, worldviews, communication skills, resilience, well-being, and intergroup biases.

All these components (see figure 23.3) impinge upon the ingredients of contact between police and the public [Ce], be they traffic stops, domestic violence, suicide attempts, hostage negotiations, or other types of encounters. Contact situations is pluralized as it can be a specific contained incident and/or its subsequent aftermath (which can be prolonged, as evident in the 2020 Minneapolis case study below). Processually, this component embraces how these situations are interpreted and with what kinds of experiences and expressed affect and communication patterns. These may include accommodation or nonaccommodation, de-escalation, use of procedural justice principles, and the exercise of various levels of force. This [Cf] can necessitate, or not, mutual aid from other internal units, such as SWAT and detectives and, arguably, affiliated external units and institutions, such as other first responders (fire, medics), coroners' offices, social workers, medical and mental health professionals, district attorneys, the National Guard, mayors, governors, and journalists and the news media (see chapter 4, 9, and 19). These forces together have a wide range of longer-term social (and intergroup) outcomes [Cg], such as officer indictments, police complaints and legal procedures, certain communities' willingness (or not) to report crime, community support, and collaborative dialogue on the one hand, and aggravated public mistrust on the other (see chapter 13). These forces also have career implications for officers, as well as effects on officer health and wellness.

Transactionally, all these forces feedback to [Ca], and continually refashion societal and cultural values and practices, and the very nature of the evolving intergroup history associated with police-public relations. Figure 23.4 signifies where we believe the preceding chapters' analyses fit appropriately within our model. As can be seen, chapters can be located in more than one conceptual space, while it is acknowledged that some chapters—and for a variety of reasons including the breadth of their coverage—could be positioned elsewhere, too.
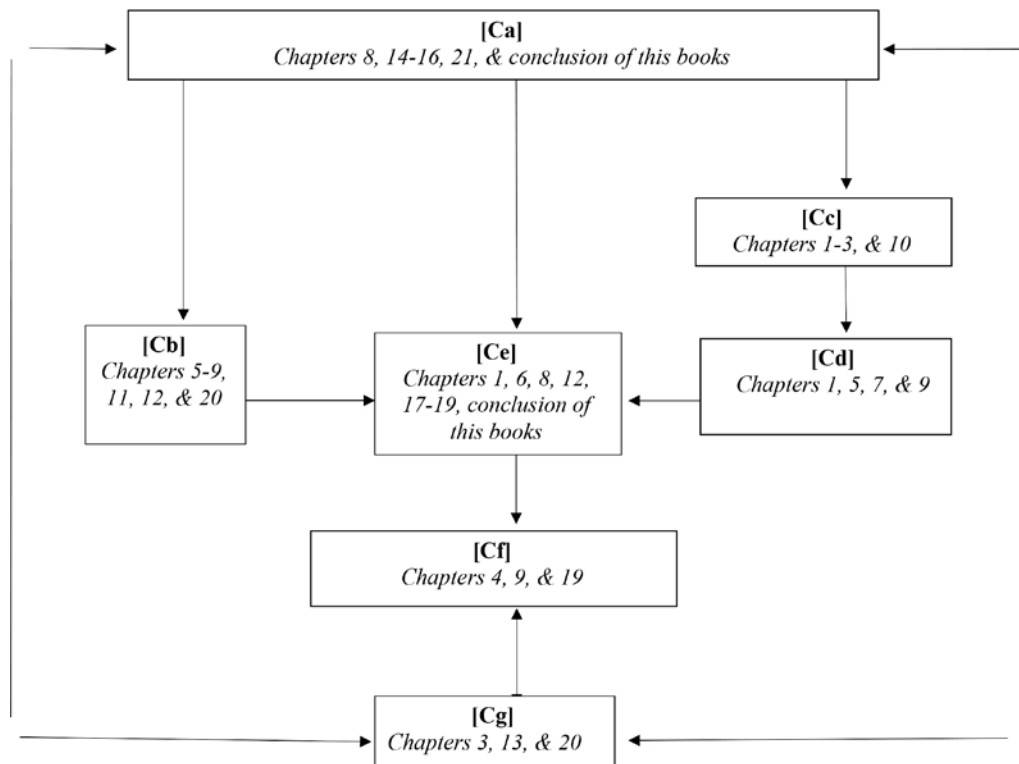
FIGURE 23.4. The Model of Communication, Policing and Society with Illustrative Chapters

For us, the value of this working and developing heuristic is that, arguably, it provides a bird's eye view of the many, albeit not all, interlocking factors that make up policing and perceptions of it in a society. This more or less all-inclusive structure, thereby, encourages the perspective that interventions, education, and reforms regarding any single component of the model necessitate examining the need for change at most other levels, too, if success is to ensue. Robust evaluative assessments over time are necessary, of course, to determine the latter. Taking a conservative, cautious approach to the network of causal links implied in figure 23.3, the model in its entirety is, admittedly, beyond total empirical scrutiny. The next phase of theorizing—which should be international, cross-cultural, and multidisciplinary—should be to specify the conditions necessary, and reasons for, the links between the components of the model as well as defining their boundary conditions (such as, for example, temporal aspects of [Ce] in different locales and across varying incidents and intergroup encounters).

To contextualize our framework in real time, with real events, and real people, we examine the dynamics of a recent dramatic incident that occurred in Minneapolis in May 2020, and which resulted in protests and riots lasting much longer than either the Watts riots in 1965 or the Rodney King riots in 1992 (see, for example, Hazen 1992; Horne 1997). This was the death of a forty-six-year-old black man named George Floyd, who was arrested by three white officers and one Asian American officer for possession of a counterfeit $20 bill and resisting arrest. As manifested by videos from an array of public bystanders, Mr. Floyd was killed, while handcuffed, by one of the officers kneeling

on his neck—and another kneeling on his back—for about eight minutes. Other officers stood by and failed to intervene as Mr. Floyd was killed. This viral event, which showed Floyd uttering that he could not breathe sixteen times (while also asking for his deceased mother), triggered worldwide anger and outrage regarding police use of force. It was followed by concentrated global media coverage of hundreds of thousands of people protesting and rioting across the United States for well over a week (see also Horace and Harris 2018; Nelson 2000; Pegues 2017).

The unfolding of this incident and its numerous consequences are exceedingly complex and occurred over a prolonged period of time. We cannot do full justice below to any analytical untangling of all the sequencing of its communicative and intergroup dynamics. But we draw on important features of this incident and its aftermath to illustrate the relationships within and between the components of the model in figure 23.3, some of which, understandably, are more directly relevant to understanding this particular situation than others. Information about this incident and its aftermath is derived, in part, from mainstream media sources. At the time this chapter was written, an authoritative, well-documented account of these events was not yet available (such as the results of a federal investigation or an after-action report written by a neutral party). Given the literature on media bias, we acknowledge the possibility of bias in some of the media sources used in this section (Clark, Bland, and Livingston 2017; Dukes and Gaither 2017). As more evidence becomes available, it will be possible to corroborate these details more carefully.

The Model Applied to a Real Event: The Police Killing of George Floyd[1]

[Ca] SOCIETY AND EVOLVING INTERGROUP HISTORIES:

While "intergroup histories" appeared in the earlier Choi and Giles (2012) model, it was given short shrift there. We consider it more extensively here as a fundamental construct in this book's tripartite title and one vividly playing out during the course of this incident.

- Many media commentators and the public viewed this incident as the last straw. They alleged that since the demonstrations following the Rodney King incident in 1991 (see, for example, Martin 2005), no real reforms had been enacted nationally to address racial injustice involving the police.
- Just a couple of months before this incident, Ahmaud Arbery, a twenty-five-year-old black man who was out for a jog in a Georgia neighborhood, was chased by three white men, one of whom shot and killed him. Local authorities released the suspects after determining that the shooting constituted an act of self-defense. Under great pressure, state authorities took on the case and arrested the suspects two months later.
- Activists, scholars, and celebrities (e.g., Jane Fonda and Spike Lee) argued that the United States had a history of violating black people's civil rights in the context of white privilege going back four hundred years.

- Increased attention during the aftermath was given recalling past events as "Juneteenth," which goes back to 1866 and commemorates the ending of slavery.
- Increased attention was also given to "Black Wall Street," an event in Tulsa that caused the death of over three hundred Black people and the destruction of their neighborhoods in 1921.
- The aftermath of Floyd's death also essentially resurrected memories of "Windrush Day" in Britain, an annual event that marks the arrival of Afro-Caribbean people in 1948.
- Relatedly, others pointed to the historical disadvantage people of color faced in terms of health care and economic well-being. For instance, COVID-19 has exerted a disproportionate toll on racial and ethnic minorities. George Floyd's death occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unemployment rates soared due to business closures during the pandemic, affecting minorities more heavily than others. The cumulative effect of these multiple sources of racial inequity and injustice arising at the same time is not yet well studied, but it is likely that the co-occurrence of these factors fueled the massive wave of protests and riots that took place in the summer of 2020 following Mr. Floyd's death.

[Cb] MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC'S ATTRIBUTES:

- George Floyd was raised in the Third Ward of Houston, Texas, where his large, media-covered, and emotionally moving funeral was held. Stephen Jackson, his long-time friend and former NBA player, speaking at a rally celebrating the victim, characterized him as "a gentle giant. He was a protector, a provider. He wanted everybody to be happy and have a good time. That was his thing."
- A number of bystanders witnessed the police use of force against Mr. Floyd and begged the officers to release him.
- The next day, this incident led large numbers of people to protest in major cities across the country and around the world. The crowds were diverse in terms of visible characteristics like age and race. Some events were peaceful, and others evolved into riots, with property destruction, theft, and violence. Video footage of the incidents revealed people experiencing a variety of emotions, including anger and sadness. As conflict arose between police and protesters, there were also many instances of crowds that behaved in a defiant and rebellious manner. Many reported feeling fear, as in "Am I the next?," but also exclaimed intergroup sentiments, such as "These are *our* streets!" The intergroup composition of protesters was also diverse in terms of their being, in the main, peaceful participants, but present with other various infiltrating groups, such as outside agitators, anarchists, opportunists (and possibly White supremacists and Antifa). Often, and while coordinated, the latter interweaved into the crowd. This prompted community leaders, self-appointed or elected, to be heard urging protesters to be wary of outside looters and to keep their own message of the movement focused, vocal, and clear. Not unrelatedly, a self-described Ku Klux Klan leader was arrested for allegedly driving his car into a group of Black Lives Matters protesters gathered in Virginia (see BBC News 2020).

[Cc] POLICE CULTURE, LEADERSHIP, AND POLICIES:

- Leaders of the Minneapolis Police Department declared that there were clear policies in place dictating appropriate use of force to be used by officers. The officers' actions suggest their organizational culture influenced their actions despite their policy.

[Cd] OFFICERS' ATTRIBUTES:

- As said above, three of four officers were White (with another being of Hmong descent and only four days on the job), with the "neck-kneeling" officer Derek Chauvin reportedly having a history of involvement in at least eighteen prior complaints. Chauvin, together with the three officers working with him, was fired two days after the incident (Andone, Silverman, and Alonso 2020).
- Subsequently, Chauvin was arrested for third degree murder and manslaughter, a charge that inflamed the victim's family who felt it should have been first-degree murder. Later, the other three officers were arrested for their complicity and charged with aiding and abetting murder, and Chauvin's charge amended to second-degree murder.
- Albeit rarely commented on by media journalists, many of the officers working the demonstrations were themselves members of the Black community.

[Ce] CONTACT SITUATIONS (IN THE STREETS) AND THE EMERGENT AFTERMATH:

- The viral video footage of Mr. Floyd's death led hundreds of thousands of people across the nation to demonstrate and chant slogans against the police and calling for racial justice.
- Nationwide, the behavior of the protesters in the streets varied, with some remaining peaceful and others choosing more destructive or violent tactics. Some protesters set alight police cruisers; lit fires; shut down freeways; threw frozen plastic water bottles, bricks, and other projectiles at the police; engaged in looting and burning of buildings (including a small fire at a historic church in Washington, DC, and the burning of a police precinct in Minneapolis).[2] Thousands across the nation engaged in civil disobedience, some admitting (given COVID-19) they were participating while knowingly risking their personal health, and were arrested for curfew (and other) violations; at least thirty-seven cities across the nation were under curfew, and 2,700 people were arrested in Los Angeles County alone over four days. In some cities, police chose not to arrest peaceful protesters for curfew violations or ignoring orders to disperse.
- Many events across the nation portrayed the police and allied agencies as acting unnecessarily aggressively; some commentators went so far as to claim "the police are rioting" (DeBoule 2020). One incident that went viral was a Kansas City officer arresting and pepper-spraying a member of the public who was merely yelling at him (and other officers). Another viral video showed a Philadelphia police inspector hitting a student in the head with a metal baton, sending the student to

the hospital (Ly 2020). A crowd of about a hundred officers there gathered outside their local union headquarters in support of one of their own and applauded him. The most potent of these incidents was the now infamous occasion when US president Donald Trump allegedly orchestrated the removal of peaceful protesters from Lafayette Park with officers and agents using batons, chemical agents, and kinetic impact munitions, This was allegedly so that the president could participate in a brief photo opportunity at a nearby church. In one of many acts of solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter movement, Washington, DC, mayor Muriel Bowser quickly renamed the street across from the White House where this incident occurred "Black Lives Matter Plaza."

- Looting in several cities, particularly at night, led to extensive graffiti, some of which, with epithets, categorized *all* police officers as "bad" and even called for their deaths.

- Looters reportedly moved strategically into side alleys and streets using scouts and social media to orchestrate their movements, thereby avoiding confrontations with law enforcement as well as in some cases feeding opportunities for vandalism.

- Nonetheless, some protesters often protected not only stores from looters but also lone officers physically under threat from members of the public.

- A few officers working these demonstrations were summarily dismissed by their chiefs for excessive use of force. The Los Angeles Police Department is investigating no less than fifty-six allegations of misconduct by officers during protests in the wake of George Floyd's death. Of those investigations, twenty-eight involve alleged use of force.

- One evening in Washington, DC, a Black Hawk helicopter was seen flying low trying to disperse the crowd, which caused a public outcry against the use of military force.

- Nonetheless, many police chiefs, police associations, and unions quickly and openly condemned the actions that led to the death of George Floyd.

- With an aim of promoting positive relationships (intergroup contact), officers from many police agencies (e.g., Coral Gables and Atlanta) and police chiefs and sheriffs (e.g., New York City and Flint, Michigan) knelt alongside protesters in solidarity. This aligns with social psychological work on superordinate identities as in, for example, "We're all in this together as Americans" (Khan and Samarina 2007). It also aligns with the common ingroup identity theory, which suggests that intergroup biases can be reduced if different groups conceive of themselves as having shared experiences or being part of the same group (Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, and Pearson 2016; Gaertner and Dovidio 2012; see chapter 1). Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo also offered unprecedented security for the victim's funeral and even offered a police escort to the funeral entourage in his city.

- Minneapolis Police chief Medaria Arradondo threw down his baton and hugged protesters and spoke in a TV interview with members of the Floyd family, apologizing and expressing regret and support for them. He also removed his hat a number of times for respect of the family. In many ways, this is communication accommodation (see Giles 2016)—acts that have been discussed throughout this book—at its most profound level.

[Cf] OTHER UNITS AND AGENCIES:

- Many police departments requested mutual aid from other nearby agencies, and the National Guard was drafted in some of these instances. In Washington, DC, the Trump administration called on officers from a number of different federal agencies, many of whom showed up in riot gear without badges, agency identifiers, or personal identifiers. Put differently, heavily armed agents lined the streets of Washington, DC, without any indication of who they were or what agency they worked for. Anecdotal observations by some contended that certain external agencies tended to be more aggressive on occasion than the local agencies. These concerns are reminiscent of a larger debate about how to calibrate the use of mutual aid when handling crowd events (Maguire and Oakley 2020).

- At one point, a CNN news crew was arrested and detained without providing an explanation; the Minneapolis mayor saw this on television and apologized to CNN. On another occasion, a TV crew was told to comply with curfew rules even though they insisted that they were essential workers legally excluded from such legal requirements. These incidents raise constitutional issues associated with the First Amendment's freedom of the press provision.

- When addressing the issue of whether Chauvin's accomplices were going to be indicted, a Minneapolis district attorney erroneously claimed there were video data suggesting the officers' actions were lawful. This statement, for which he later publicly apologized, was yet another message that ignited public fury.

- Another message that detonated public outrage was when President Trump said on live television that he might send in the military "to dominate the streets" if governors could not control the civil disturbances in their own states. This suggestion of using the military against American citizens was resoundingly criticized in the media by both current and former secretaries of defense and other military leaders who historically have refrained from speaking out on political matters.

[Cg] SOCIAL OUTCOMES

- Campaign Zero, a well-known police reform nonprofit, argues that its ten recommended policy solutions will reduce police use of force and hold police accountable (see https://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision). Although Campaign Zero makes bold claims about these "data driven" solutions, many of them are not evidence-based. The US Congress, only two weeks following the Floyd killing, tabled a police reform bill. A couple of days later, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) announced their own policy framework for "Improved Community-Police Engagement."

- Disney reported that it was donating $5 million to nonprofit organizations that advance social justice. Michael Jordan's Foundation also donated $5 million for nonprofit social justice agencies, the first $2 million going immediately to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), while Bank of America pledged $1 billion over four years to minority communities to restore economic and racial equality.

- The mural of George Floyd painted in the vicinity of his demise, where large numbers of Minneapolis citizens gathered to meditate, pay tribute, and celebrate his life, will likely remain a historic visual symbol of his role in American life for many years to come. Other vividly impressive murals have appeared elsewhere in the country, such as a street near the White House, and in downtown Santa Barbara, California.
- The California governor announced that restrictions were going to be placed on certain neck restraints and chokeholds. The New York Assembly passed the Eric Garner Anti-Chokehold Act that makes the use of a chokehold by a police officer a felony. It creates a new crime called aggravated strangulation and carries a maximum sentence of fifteen years.
- The Floyd incident also led to the resurrection of previous controversial police-related deaths. One such case involved Breonna Taylor, a twenty-six-year-old emergency medical technician shot by Louisville police, who allegedly broke into her apartment on March 13, 2020. Subsequently, Louisville's city council unanimously voted to ban "no knock" warrants and required officers to activate their body cameras upon entry; this was called Breonna's Law. Another such case had occurred on March 28, 2019, in Williamson County, Texas, where a forty-year-old Black man was pleading with deputies that he had a heart condition and could not breathe. He was repeatedly tased following a pursuit that began when the man had not dimmed his headlights to an oncoming police cruiser. This case never made national headlines until after Floyd's death. On March 3, 2020, medical examiners ruled Manuel Ellis's death a homicide and said the Black man died from a lack of oxygen due to physical restraint by police officers in Tacoma, Washington. Certain police-involved deaths, like George Floyd's in 2020 and Michael Brown's in 2014, become highly newsworthy. Such incidents not only serve to raise awareness about racial justice issues, they also help to shine a light on incidents that, for whatever reason, were not previously deemed as newsworthy (see chapter 16).
- The National Football League's commissioner announced that he had been wrong, seasons ago, to decry players kneeling while the national anthem was being played at the start of game. Taking a knee was intended to call attention to police misconduct and racial injustice. The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) drivers also threw their support behind the protesters after a noose was discovered in the garage of African American driver Bubba Wallace. Indeed, a CNN poll showed that 84 percent of Americans supported the peaceful protests thirteen days into the demonstrations, with 65 percent evaluating police practices as harmful (Sparks 2020).
- Large-scale demonstrations in major cities across the globe emerged many times in light of the Floyd killing. In a protest supporting the US Black Lives Matter movement, a prominent statue of a slave trader, Edward Colston, which was erected in 1895, was pulled down by protesters in Bristol, UK. Google maps locates it now in the Avon River.
- Two weeks into the aftermath, House Democrats unveiled a legislative blueprint for reforming policing policies.[3]
- Widespread cries to "defund the police" were proclaimed, even printed in large letters on a street near the White House. While this has received mixed support

and at best is ambiguously conceived, the Minneapolis City Council did support an intention toward such actions by means of a veto-proof 9 to 13 majority. The movement to defund the police has various strands, from outright abolition of police to reassigning certain social problems to other agencies or professions, such as social workers or clinicians. Some politicians have interpreted the defunding movement as a means to transfer funds away from certain aspects of police work that critics view as inappropriate (such as assigning resource officers to schools or responding to mental health crises).

FEEDBACK FROM [Cg] TO [Ca] AND THEN FLUIDLY IMPACTING OTHER COMPONENTS:

- In a seemingly unrelated incident the same week, the mayor of Louisville fired his police chief (who was about to retire that month anyway) following an incident in which police shot a man but body camera footage was unavailable from three officers present at the incident. Undoubtedly, this action was spurred by the social and outcomes described in [Cg] that feed back into [Ca] and then trickled down to [Ce]; and all this much in contrast to any traditional code of police silence (see chapter 1).
- Similarly, the public's learning of other Black deaths due to restraint holds and other violent actions (as above) will necessarily also feed back into revising society's understandings of the extent of police misconduct.

Research and Practical Challenges Arising from This Case Study

In sum, and returning to our model of figure 23.3, we have seen how historical messages passed down for generations, and even intergroup events witnessed by the public and police in more recent times, can affect how an encounter between them plays out as well as the course of its aftermath. Intergroup messaging is ubiquitous throughout. We also saw that both sides—along with other agencies and social institutions—can act and communicate in accommodative *as well as* nonaccommodative ways. Put another way, recent events have really brought out some of the best and some of the worst of all participating sides. Whether this event is a tipping point, as has been declared by so many, that brings more awareness and breaks cycles of inequality and racism will become clear in due course. In this regard, former president Barack Obama argued that "there is a mindset that's taking place, a greater recognition that we can do better." Furthermore, he proposed that each mayor should review their local police procedures regularly and report on them; some have agreed to do that.

The task of reform is, however, Herculean as indicated thirteen days into the protests in Buffalo. A seventy-five-year-old man was suddenly pushed to the ground by an officer, fell quickly, and remained motionless with blood visibly seeping from his head onto the ground. Later in the hospital he was suspected of having brain damage and was unable to walk. The officer who committed this act and another walked past without aiding him. The victim was taken to the hospital in a stable but serious condition. These two officers were suspended without pay, but fifty-seven of their colleagues resigned from a special operations unit in solidarity with their disciplined colleagues.

Furthermore, these officers were charged with felony assault and applauded when leaving the courthouse by some of their colleagues. These incidents, and others, occurring *at that particular point in time* highlight the intergroup nature of the police–citizen relationship and the influence of ingroup solidarity.

Longitudinal research is needed not only to monitor any changes (or not) emerging in police reforms but, especially, the social consequences of these for different intergroup entities of both the public and law enforcement agencies. Charges of racism are, of course, not confined to the United States as this has been endemic to many European nations for a very long time (e.g., Cole 1997; MacEwen 1995; MacMaster 2001). Hence, it will be interesting to see what kinds of changes, if any, emerge across that continent in terms of tackling institutional racism and police reforms. Not unrelatedly, an unpredictably large number of three thousand protesters attended a memorial for George Floyd outside the US Embassy in Madrid. Clearly, *international* collaborations to conduct such longitudinal studies more globally would be invaluable.

Our hope in these uncertain times is that mechanisms can be put in place which proactively and creatively generate an armory of harmonious solutions to these intergroup tensions (see Mckesson 2019; McPherson 2018; Watson 2016) and that go well beyond mere conversations and enhance societal processes in a favorable way (for hope theory, see Snyder 2002). The fact that large and different social communities and races have been united in taking joint action to work on racism is very encouraging; as were the continual words of love and justice rather than words of hate and revenge at Floyd's funeral service. Furthermore, the proposed bill in Congress[4] and the policy guidelines from the IACP (both mentioned above) as well as actions of police chiefs are significant and swift signals that these institutions and leaders recognize the need for change. Consequently, we will have to wait and see in what ways police organizations modify their selection procedures and training academies and programs (see chapter 3). How all this, in turn, affects the next generation's desire to be recruited and retained in law enforcement as an appealing and respected profession could be another social outcome on the horizon.

Nonetheless, how totally unexpected—but perhaps inevitable—future events such as members of the public seeing and benefiting from courageous first responders saving lives in mass shootings could have significant and salutary effects in transforming the current social climate. Indeed, the support that law enforcement provides the community (e.g., Police Activities League) is rarely dramatic enough fodder for news reporting and its lack thereof probably plays some part in some members of the public (as seen by protesters' placards) believing that *all* cops are racist and abusive (e.g., ACAB, "All Cops Are Bastards"). This speaks to the fact that the community also has profound biases that need to be socially as well as educationally addressed (see Giles, Willemyns, Gallois, and Anderson 2007).

While the focus has, understandably, been on targeting police reform given the death of George Floyd and similar events, the implications are far wider in terms of tackling systemic, institutional racism (e.g., ethnic disparities in housing, employment, health care, wealth, and criminal justice). Often, police reform is provided as a solution to societal ills in a social vacuum. Furthermore, the victims of social and institutional discrimination go far beyond ethnic minorities to other marginalized communities, for

example, people with disabilities, older folk, and those with different sexual orientations and identities, such as Black transwomen who have increasingly been the victims of violence (for the important notion of so-called "intersectionality," see chapters 7 and 19; also Crenshaw 1991).

That said, cultural shifts were beginning to be evident in the unifying number of White protesters with Black and other members of the public calling for reforms; NASCAR drivers' requests that no Confederate flags be waved at their sporting events; the pulling down of long-standing statues of slave owners in and beyond the United States; the pleas for the stripping of Confederate generals' names associated with military bases as well as their statues; the acknowledgement of some that certain TV shows (e.g., cop shows; see chapter 15) and classic movies (e.g., *Gone with the Wind*) are inherently racist; and the restoration of affirmative action for academic institutions (e.g., University of California). The question is this: What number and nature of these changes over time need to be visibly in place to quell protesters' (and others') anger, fear, and anxieties so that people can proclaim "justice" now prevails?

Arguably, there are more *questions* raised by incidents such as the Floyd case and their aftermath than ready-made answers. These questions might propel communication and policing research toward being part of the societal solution:

- What forms of communication, besides physical street protest, can propel changes regarding policing excessive use of force: letters, emails, and social media posts to mayors, police chiefs, governors, and other key officials? There must be an alternative for people to take action that has some real impact without getting in close physical proximity to potential COVID-19 carriers; a phenomenon that could be called protest "suicide by COVID-19."[5]
- How should protesters most effectively communicate their message of disapproval of police brutality? Is marching together with placards sufficient; if so, where and for how long? Toward what benefit should protesters engage officers, when, how, and why?
- To what extent do current policing practices stimulate self-policing within crowds so that moderate protesters help to prevent more radical protesters from engaging in property damage, violence, and looting behaviors? What types of communication-based reforms can police implement to encourage self-policing and other prosocial behaviors within crowds (see chapter 22)?
- Do Black and White protestors feel integrated in a common cause and set of values? And how do they communicate this to each other, if at all? Does the communicative presence of racial and ethnic minority officers (and women) have any beneficial effects on calming and de-escalating the protests?
- Are public messages from police chiefs and police associations condemning police brutality, and expressing empathy for victims and their families, effective forms of communication? How are such messages perceived by those involved in protesting police brutality and racial injustice?
- Given the serious concerns being expressed by Black Lives Matter protesters and their allies, what steps can police leaders take to build trust and establish legitimacy among people who allege that police engage in racially discriminatory behavior?

- Given mounting evidence of significant morale deficits among police officers, what steps can communities take to support, empower, and reward dedicated police officers who engage in fair, judicious, empathetic, and skilled policing?

OTHER MAJOR CHALLENGES

The previous conjecture segues into the title of this last section. One opening avenue here is to acknowledge an admission we made in the prologue of this book, namely, that not all topics, social groups, and crimes could be accommodated in one volume and, indeed, too few have communication research associated with them as yet. Relatedly, and appearing below, is a selected sample of topics that might benefit from methodologically diverse research from intergroup communication and other theoretical stances (for example, uncertainty management theories, see Hogg and Belvadi 2018).

First, little is known about communication dynamics in policing outside of the developed industrial democracies where most police research takes place. Understanding these dynamics within developing nations, emerging democracies, and other settings would be a useful contribution (see Pino and Wiatrowski 2016). For instance, we know that police play a fundamental role in both facilitating and undermining democratic governance, but little is known about the extent to which communication dynamics play a role in generating these powerful effects.

Second, international collaboration between law enforcement agencies represents a robust communication challenge. These agencies are often geographically distant from one another; have different governmental and organizational mandates; have different regional, national, organizational, and operational cultures; and often speak different languages. All these challenges make it difficult for these agencies to come together in the fight against terrorism and organized criminal elements worldwide (Sellar 2020). To what extent are these efforts hindered or facilitated by communication issues and how can such issues be most effectively addressed?

Third, much remains to be learned about policing homeless people of different generations (Dollar and Zimmers 1998; Gately 2019) and opioid (and other) substance abusers (Smith 2019; see chapter 9). These populations attract a significant proportion of calls for service from law enforcement as the number of homeless people and addicts have continued to increase in size in major cities during the last decade, particularly on the West Coast (https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_19_177). As such, this topic is inevitably likely to command a considerable amount of attention in the upcoming years, particularly as it relates policing policies, practices, and interventions (see Hipple 2016; Hipple, Schaefer, Hipple, and Ballew 2016), and in crisis situations like a global pandemic.

Fourth, as we were finalizing this book, the world was suddenly forced to deal with COVID-19, a global pandemic with massive implications for policing and society. We regret that we were unable to include a chapter on this timely issue, but we recognize the likelihood that epidemics and pandemics will likely continue to be salient issues. As COVID-19 spread globally, the world saw numerous examples of communication issues involving the police. As governments and public health authorities released mandates,

the duty for enforcing those mandates often fell on the police. Suddenly, police agencies that had invested heavily in building legitimacy in the eyes of the public found themselves enforcing curfews, social distancing and stay-at-home orders, and public health guidelines recommending or requiring the public to wear face masks. How police chose to respond to the communication challenges inherent in their pandemic response had fundamental effects on public trust and police legitimacy. Understanding these communication issues at a deeper level will be important for police and those who study them.

Fifth, scholars have long recognized that police are one part of a network of institutions for addressing community problems. Some of these networks are vertical, such as in the local, provincial/state, and national law enforcement and intelligence response to terrorism and organized crime. Some of these are horizontal, such as in the law enforcement and public health response to emotionally disturbed people and those with addiction problems (Gilson 2020). Certain police officers or officials serve as boundary-spanners in these interorganizational relationships, with responsibility for communicating on behalf of their organization with other organizations in the network. For example, a police officer who serves on a multiagency task force serves as the linchpin for his or her organization to communicate with the boundary-spanners from the other organizations in the network. Little is known about these interorganizational communication dynamics in the various networks of organizations in which police agencies are enmeshed. Furthermore, it would be interesting to know when mutual aid for police departments is successful (as in the Minneapolis protests around the country), when and why it might falter, and what communicative improvements need to be put in place to benefit the collaborative efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

Communication matters. It is perhaps the most important tool a police officer will use in their career. Communication can resolve conflict or have the potential for devastating effects to relationships. Understanding the processes surrounding how we communicate is integral to successful police–citizen interactions. Additionally, acknowledging the intergroup anxieties forged in the history shared by police and marginalized groups can help police become better prepared to succeed in an intergroup setting. We suggest that most, if not all, police–citizen interactions are intergroup in nature, and many of these forces can, in their own ways, work within the profession.

Research in communication accommodation theory (CAT) and intergroup communication (see chapter 1) suggests that people tend to *converge* communicatively toward people with whom they identify. That is, they accommodate the interlocutor's communication style, which leads to improved communication effectiveness. Or, *divergence* can occur; that is, people use communication to put social distance between themselves and their perceived outgroups (often subconsciously). This can be the case when intergroup bias exists, and people discriminate against outgroups. Considering that police hold a complex place in society where they are authorized to coerce the public with physical force in order to protect civil peace and, at the same time, have to negotiate and manage challenging communicative issues and dilemmas within their organizations,

we suggest that research in the field of communication, especially intergroup communication, be embraced and expanded.

The chapters in this volume address many of the issues that challenge police and the public in today's society. Most of these challenges involve communicating between different groups. The "us versus them" mentality between police and the public is perhaps the most salient of these intergroup relationships; and as many of these chapters suggest, this mentality remains an obstacle to community policing efforts. This book provides a foundation to begin identifying and understanding policing problems in a variety of intergroup contexts.

NOTES

1. Much of the description of events was obtained through news outlets and the editors' experience.

2. This effect, originally posited after the Kitty Genovese murder in 1964, claims that the more bystanders there are around someone in distress, the less likely it is that someone will do something to help (Darley and Latané 1968).

3. Relatedly, Giles (2012, 10) wrote that "although rarely highlighted in the study of intergroup communication, the strength of a group can often be a function of the distinctiveness of its geographic and cultural homes. . . .The distinctiveness of a structure . . . can be a source of considerable pride." Not unrelated, protestors in Seattle took control of six blocks, an area called CHAZ (Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, and later CHOP); there protesters temporarily commandeered a police precinct.

4. This bill includes reforms making it easier to sue police officers for misconduct in civil court and to prosecute them for criminal behavior. It would prohibit the use of chokeholds and certain no-knock warrants by police nationwide and give the Justice Department civil rights division subpoena power to investigate local police departments.

The bill also mandates the use of body cameras, bans the transfer of certain military equipment to police departments, and creates a national database disclosing the names of officers with a pattern of abuse. It would make lynching a federal crime. Even if passed, the bill would need to go before the Senate. In tandem, the French interior minister has declared that the use of chokeholds will be discontinued in police training.

5. Labeled to us in a personal communication, by one of our contributors, Joseph Walther.

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